Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Inc

March 1998

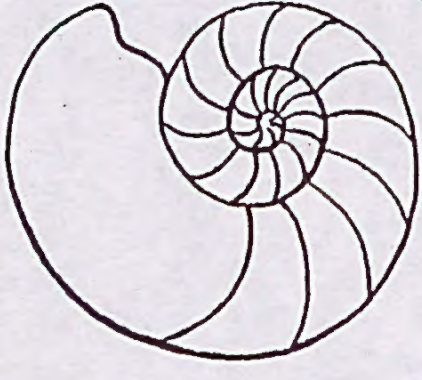


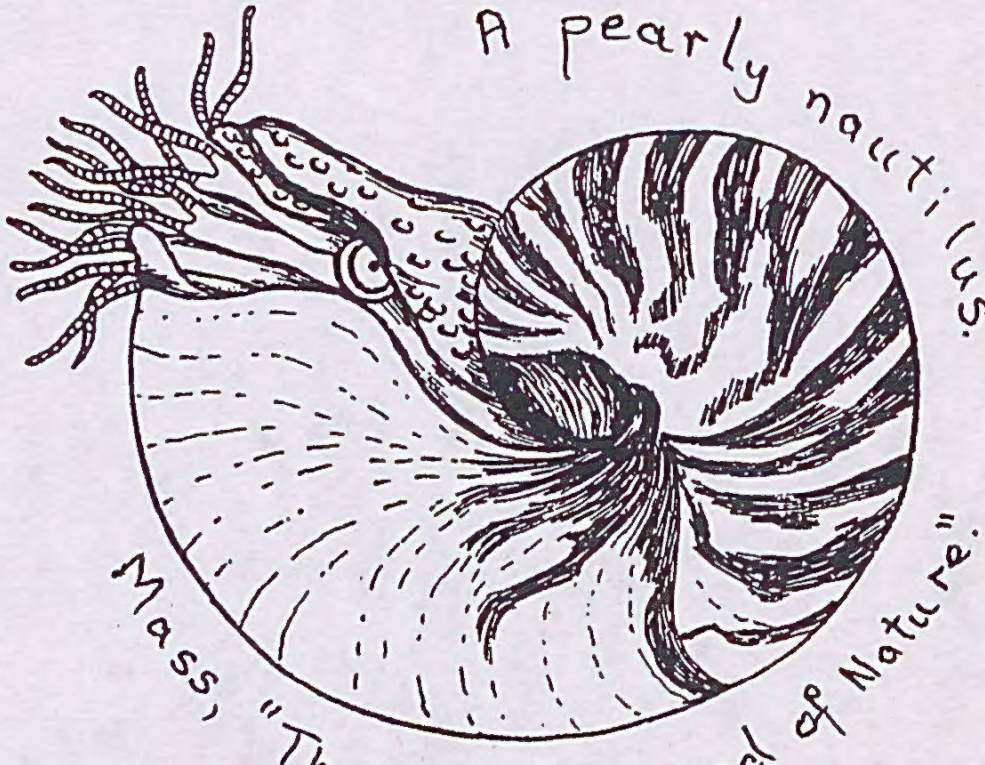
Leafy Seadragon
(*Phycodurus eques*)
Nat. Aust. Sum. '97-'98

Meetings are held at the Ballarat Horticulture centre, corner of Gregory and Gillies Streets, ie. the NW corner of the Botanic Gardens, commencing at 7-30pm

President: Mr Greg Binns..... Secretary: Mr Lindsay Pink.....
Treasurer: Mr John Gregurke..... Editor: Mr Brian Andrews.....
Postal Address: PO Box 328W, Ballarat West,3350

A nautilus shell cut through, to show the seperate "rooms."





~The nautilus only ever lives in one of them!

DIARY DATES

13th MAR. Meeting. AGM and Members Night: Short presentations by members of the club. Theme: coastal topics.

15th MAR. Excursion. Creswick - Koala Park, St Georges Lake (lunch at Eastern end), Eatons Dam.
Depart 9-30am, Book City.

25th MAR. Committee Meeting. 7-30pm, Pat Murphys',

3rd APR. Meeting. Conservation Values of Remnant Vegetation. Speaker - Chantelle James.

5th APR. Excursion. A study of Blampied - Kooroocheang area.

FIELD REPORTS

Reports were scarce at the December meeting but they flooded in at the February meeting! People made good use of the holiday break!

Common Imperial Blue Butterflies, pupae, caterpillars and attendant ants in blackwood tree at Durham Lead. Ant Mimicking Spider (*Myrmarachne striatipes)*, also at Durham Lead - it even walked on 6 legs like an ant! Five recently hatched cygnets on the Buninyong Gong (19th Jan) - makes the activity cycle in the Oct issue look a bit obsolete! Brian Andrews

Echidna, happily eating ants on laundry step, Black Hill. Delphine McDonald.

Grey Fantails, Convent Corner, Lake Wendouree, Christmas Day. Blue Billed Duck, New Years Day. Carol Hall.

Immature Rufous Bristle Birds, near Aireys Inlet. Ken McDonald.

Wood Duck with 30 young, early Nov. at Forbes. Brian Gavin.

Previous similar observation in WA, 20 young. Carol Hall.

Koala, Watson Dve, Mt Pleasant. Brian Gavin.

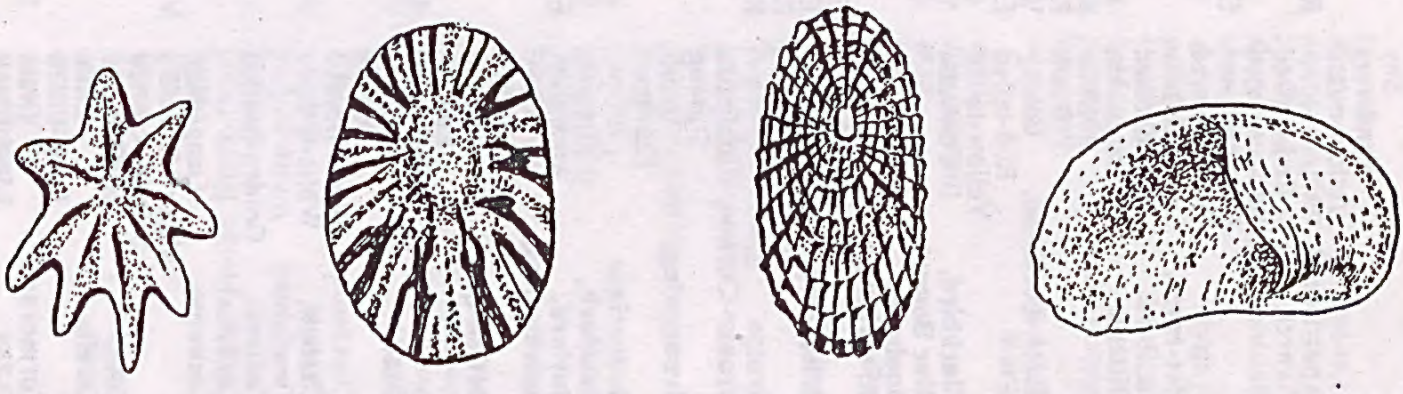
Gang Gang Cockatoos, Halls Gap, inspecting tree hollows - but being chased away by correllas. Ken Hammond.

Lerderderg - Wombat area, lack of birds, track wrecked by 4WDs. Mosquito Flat - good succession, Chinese Coffee Bush, 3-4m high, several birds including male Red Capped Robin, Diamond Firetails. Frank Harrap.

Hyacinth Orchids, magnificent display at the Princess Margaret Rose Cave. Claire Dalman.

Clunes Swamps dry. White Browed Wood Swallows present. Greg Binns.

Great Egret on Lake Wendouree. "Thousands" of correllas eating Norfolk Pines at Warnambool. Square tailed Kites with chicks, Mt Cole. Alan Morrison.



Two true limpets... a false limpet... a slipper limpet.

Birds

Continued from February :-

Albatross,	Black-browed	
	Shy	
	Wandering	
	Yellow-nosed	
Apostlebird		R
Avocet,	Red-necked	
Babbler,	Chestnut-crowned	
	Grey-crowned	E
	White-browed	
Bee-eater,	Rainbow	
Bellbird,	Crested	
Bittern,	Australasian	I
	Little	R
	Black	R
Black-Cockatoo,	Glossy	V
	Red-tailed	E
	Yellow-tailed	
Blackbird,	Common	*
Blue Bonnet		
Boobook,	Southern	
Bowerbird,	Satin	
	Spotted	E
Bristlebird,	Eastern	E
	Rufous	R
Brolga		R
Bronze-Cuckoo,	Horsfield's	
	Shining	
Bronzewing,	Brush	
	Common	
Budgerigar		
Bushlark,	Singing	
Bustard,	Australian	E
Butcherbird,	Grey	
	Pied	
Button-quail,	Little	
	Painted	
	Red-chested	I
Chat,	Crimson	
	Orange	
	White-fronted	
Chough,	White-winged	
Cicadabird		
Cisticola,	Golden-headed	
Cockatiel		
Cockatoo,	Gang-gang	
	Major Mitchell's	V
	Sulphur-crested	
Coot,	Eurasian	
Corella,	Little	
	Long-billed	
Cormorant,	Great	
	Little Black	
	Little Pied	
	Pied	C
	Black-faced Cormorant	C
Crake,	Australian	
	Baillon's	I
	Spotless	
Crow,	Little	
Cuckoo,	Black-eared	
	Brush	
	Fan-tailed	
	Pallid	
Cuckoo-shrike,	Black-faced	
	Ground	R
	White-bellied	
Curlew,	Eastern	R
Currawong,	Grey	
	Pied	
Darter		C
Diving-Petrel,	Common	C
Dollarbird		
Dotterel,	Inland	
	Red-kneed	
Dove,	Diamond	
	Peaceful	
Duck,	Blue-billed	R
	Freckled	R
	Hardhead	
	Australian Wood	
	Musk	
	Pacific Black	
	Plumed Whistling	
	Pink-eared	
Eagle,	Little	
	Wedge-tailed	
Egret,	Cattle	
	Eastern Reef	
	Great	C
	Intermediate	C
	Little	C
Emu		
Emu-wren,	Mallee	V
	Southern	
Fairy-wren,	Splendid	
	Superb	
	Variegated	
	White-winged	
Falcon,	Black	R
	Brown	
	Grey	V
	Peregrine	
	Australian Hobby	
Fantail,	Grey	
	Rufous	
Field-wren,	Rufous	
	Striated	
Finch,	Zebra	
	Red-browed	
Firetail,	Beautiful	
	Diamond	
Flycatcher,	Leaden	
	Restless	
	Satin	
Friarbird,	Little	
	Noisy	
Frogmouth,	Tawny	
Galah		
Gannet,	Australasian	C
	Cape	R
Gerygone,	Brown	
	Western	
	White-throated	
Giant-Petrel,	Northern	
	Southern	
Godwit,	Bar-tailed	
	Black-tailed	
Goldfinch,	European	*
Goose,	Cape Barren	R
	Magpie	I
Goshawk,	Brown	
	Grey	R
Grassbird,	Little	
Grasswren,	Striated	V
Grebe,	Australasian	
	Great Crested	
	Hoary-headed	
Greenfinch,	European	*
Greenshank		
Gull,	Kelp	C
	Pacific	C
	Silver	
Hardhead		
Harrier,	Marsh	
	Spotted	
Heron,	Pacific	
	Nankeen Night	C
	Striated	
	White-faced	
Hobby,	Australian	
Honeyeater,	Black	
	Black-chinned	
	Blue-faced	
	Brown-headed	
	Crescent	
	Fuscous	
	Grey-fronted	R
	#Helmeted	E
	Lewin's	
	New Holland	
	Painted	R
	Pied	
	Purple-gaped	
	Regent	E
	Scarlet	
	Singing	
	Spiny-cheeked	
	Striped	
	Tawny-crowned	
	White-eared	
	White-fronted	
	White-naped	
	White-plumed	
	Yellow-faced	
	Yellow-plumed	
	Yellow-tufted	
Hylacola,	Chestnut-rumped	
	Shy	
Ibis,	Glossy	C
	Australian White	
	Straw-necked	
Jaeger,	Arctic	
	Pomarine	
Jacky Winter		
Kestrel,	Australian	
King-Parrot,	Australian	
Kingfisher,	Azure	
	Red-backed	
	Sacred	
Kite,	Black	
	Black-shouldered	
	Letter-winged	R
	Square-tailed	V
	Whistling	
Knot,	Great	
	Red	
Kookaburra,	Laughing	
Lapwing,	Banded	
	Masked	
Lorikeet,	Little	
	Musk	
	Purple-crowned	
	Rainbow	
Lyrebird,	Superb	
Magpie,	Australian	
Magpie Lark,		
Mallard		*
Malleefowl		V
Martin,	Fairy	
	Tree	
Miner,	Bell	
	Black-eared	E
	Noisy	
	Yellow-throated	
Mistletoebird		
Monarch,	Black-faced	
Moorhen,	Dusky	
Myna,	Common	*
Native-hen,	Black-tailed	
Needletail,	White-throated	
Nightjar,	Spotted	
	White-throated	
Oriole,	Olive-backed	
Osprey		
Owl,	Barking	R
	Barn	
	Masked	R
	Powerful	R
	Sooty	R
	Southern Boobook	
Owlet-nightjar,	Australian	
Oystercatcher,	Pied	
	Sooty	
Pardalote,	Spotted	
	Striated	
	Yellow-rumped	
Parrot,	Australian King	
	Blue Bonnet	
	Blue-winged	
	Elegant	
	Ground	R
	Mallee Ringneck	
	Mulga	
	Night	*X*
	Orange-bellied	E
	Red-rumped	
	Regent	V
	Superb	V
	Swift	E
	Turquoise	R
Pelican,	Australian	C
Penguin,	Little	
Petrel,	Blue	
	Cape	
	Great-winged	
	White-headed	
Phalarope,	Red-necked	
Pigeon,	Crested	
	Feral	*
	Wonga	
Pilotbird		
Pipit,	Richard's	
Plains-wanderer		V
Plover,	Black-fronted	
	Double-banded	
	Grey	
	Hooded	V
	Large Sand	
	Lesser Golden	
	Mongolian	
	Oriental	
	Red-capped	
Pratincole,	Australian	
Prion,	Antarctic	
	Fairy	C
	Lesser Broad-billed	
	Slender-billed	
Quail,	Brown	
	King	R
	Stubble	
Quail-thrush,	Chestnut	
	Spotted	
Rail,	Buff-banded	
	Lewin's	R
Raven,	Australian	
	Forest	
	Little	
Redthroat		V
Ringneck,	Australian	
Robin,	Eastern Yellow	
	Flame	
	Hooded	
	Pink	
	Red-capped	
	Rose	
	Scarlet	
Rosella,	Crimson	
	Eastern	
	Yellow	
Ruff		
Sanderling		
Sandpiper,	Broad-billed	
	Common	
	Cox's	
	Curlew	
	Marsh	
	Pectoral	
	Sharp-tailed	
	Terek	
	Wood	
Scrub-robin,	Southern	
Scrubwren,	Large-billed	
	White-browed	
Sea-Eagle,	White-bellied	R
Shearwater,	Flesh-footed	
	Fluttering	
	Hutton's	
	Short-tailed	
	Sooty	
Shelduck,	Australian	
Shoveler,	Australasian	
Shrike-thrush,	Grey	
Shrike-tit,	Crested	
Silvereye		
Sittella,	Varied	
Skua,	Great	
Skylark,		*
Snipe,	Latham's	
	Painted	R
Songlark,	Brown	
	Rufous	
Sparrow,	Eurasian Tree	*
	House	*
Sparrowhawk,	Collared	
Spinebill,	Eastern	
Spoonbill,	Royal	C
	Yellow-billed	
Starling,	Common	*
Stilt,	Banded	
	Black-winged	
Stint,	Long-toed	
	Red-necked	
Stone-curlew,	Bush	V
Storm-Petrel,	Grey-backed	
	White-faced	C
	Wilson's	
Swallow,	Welcome	
	White-backed	
Swamphen,	Purple	
Swan,	Black	
Swift,	Fork-tailed	
Tattler,	Grey-tailed	
Teal,	Chestnut	
	Grey	
Tern,	Arctic	
	Caspian	C
	Common	
	Crested	C
	Fairy	V
	Gull-billed	C
	Little	E
	Whiskered	C
	White-fronted	
	White-winged	
Thornbill,	Brown	
	Buff-rumped	
	Chestnut-rumped	
	Inland	
	Slender-billed	R
	Striated	
	Yellow	
	Yellow-rumped	
Thrush,	Song	*
	Bassian	
Treecreeper,	Brown	
	Red-browed	
	White-browed	V
	White-throated	
Triller,	White-winged	
Turnstone,	Ruddy	
Turtle-Dove,	Spotted	*
Wagtail,	Willie	
Warbler,	Clamorous Reed	
	Speckled	
Wattlebird,	Little	
	Red	
Weebill		
Whimbrel		
Whipbird,	Eastern	
	Western	E
Whistler,	Gilbert's	
	Golden	
	Olive	
	Red-lored	I
	Rufous	
Whistling-Duck,	Plumed	
Whiteface,	Southern	
Willie Wagtail		
Woodswallow,	Black-faced	
	Dusky	
	Masked	
	White-breasted	
	White-browed	

Helmeted Honeyeater is regarded as a sub-species.

References:

Conservation & Natural Resources. (1995) *Threatened Fauna in Victoria.*

Menkhorst, P. (1995) *Mammals of Victoria. Distribution, Ecology and Conservation.* Oxford University Press in association with CNR.

MAMMALS OF BALLARAT...No26

Rabbit - *Oryctolagus cuniculus.*

ORDER LAGOMORPHA, Family Leporidae

Introduced into South Eastern Australia in 1858 the European Rabbit spread during the following 60 years across the southern half of the continent, an area of 4,000,000 km^2. Colonisation continued despite the erection of thousands of thousands of kilometres of barrier fencing. Today the rabbit covers more than three quarters of the continent and is now an integral part of the Australian fauna.

It is a grazing animal, preferring green grass and herbage. In the arid areas they are closely associated with water courses and swamps. In wet years they spread widely into dunes and stony areas.

During the breeding season, social groups of 1-3 males and 1-7 females are formed, each group led by an aggressive male. Both sexes mature at 3-4 months. The gestation period is 30 days. A day or two before completion of the pregnancy, the female makes a short burrow with a nest of grass and fur. Litter sizes vary with age but average 4-5 blind babies, their eyes open at 10 days. The number of litters varies from 1-2 in dry years to 4-5 in more favourable years. The mean number of young produced by each female varies from 11 in marginal areas to 25 or more in more productive habitats.

More than 80% of animals die before they reach 3 months of age. Once adulthood is reached the mortality rate falls, 2-3 year old rabbits are not uncommon. The principal causes of mortality are myxomatosis, foxes and feral cats.

They are infected by several species of ectoparasitc fleas and mites.

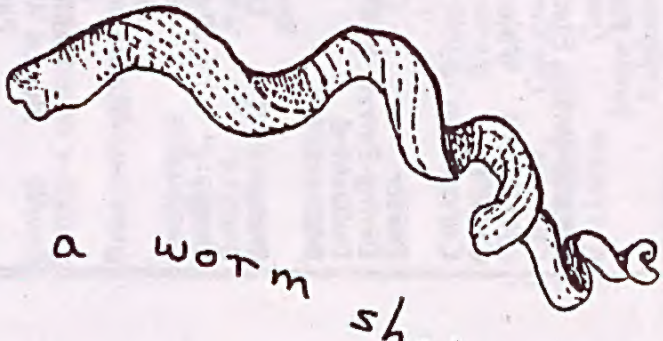
Spain was the country selected for the first rabbits to be bought out from, conditions there similar to those of Australia.

Rabbits are the most destructive and costly animals to have been bought into Australia.

Their status is abundant, there are no subspecies, they are common in and around Ballarat Elfin



A chiton



and a worm shell.

WERRIBEE EXCURSION

Rohan Bugg was going to lead this excursion but it turned out that his daughter-in-law was due to give birth on that day, so we quickly had to find another leader! Wally Cole and Helen O'Donnell graciously stepped in - and did a marvellous job!

Getting out of the car at New Farm Road I looked up and saw a Little Eagle gliding just above my head - it seemed like a good omen for the day!

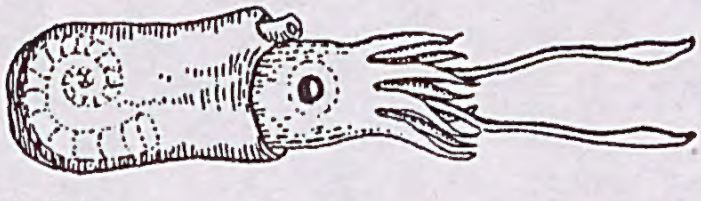
Heading off towards Pt Wilson, our first stop at one of the large ponds yielded Little Grassbird, Red-necked Avocets, Curlew Sandpipers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Australian Shelduck, White Ibis, Australasian Shoveler, Banded Stilts and Pelicans.

Stopping at Kirk's Point we observed Black Shouldered Kite, Blue Wren, Straw-necked Ibis, Turnstone and Greenshank. An immature Pacific Gull was sitting on a nearby rock and made no effort to fly away, Kevin noticed why - it had a hook in its beak and the line was tangled around a rock! It would probably have died a slow death due to starvation! Kevin waded out, grabbed the line and hauled in the gull. Several helpers worked together to hold the gull while the line was cut off - the gull didn't show much gratitude, it aggressively pecked any fingers that came within range. However I think we all felt good as the gull was released and flew out to sea - free once again! While still at Kirks Point we also had glorious views of a group of Golden Plovers.

Inspecting several of the ponds we were also able to observe Hardhead, Chestnut Teal, Blue-billed Ducks, Whiskered Terns, Pink-eared Ducks, Darters, Swamp Harriers, Black-fronted Dotterel, Red-kneed Dotterel, Yellow-billed and Royal Spoonbills, Spotted Crakes, Fairy Martins, Black-tailed Native-hens, Black-winged Stilts, Golden-headed Cisticola, Marsh Sandpipers, Moorhens, Great Egret, Whistling Kite, Brown Falcon, Gold Finch, Spotted Turtle-Dove and several other species.

The telescopes bought along by Greg and Wally were greatly appreciated, they gave great views of the waders!

Thanks to Wally and Helen for giving us a wonderful days birding!



A spirula and its ram's horn shell.



PLANT PROPAGATION

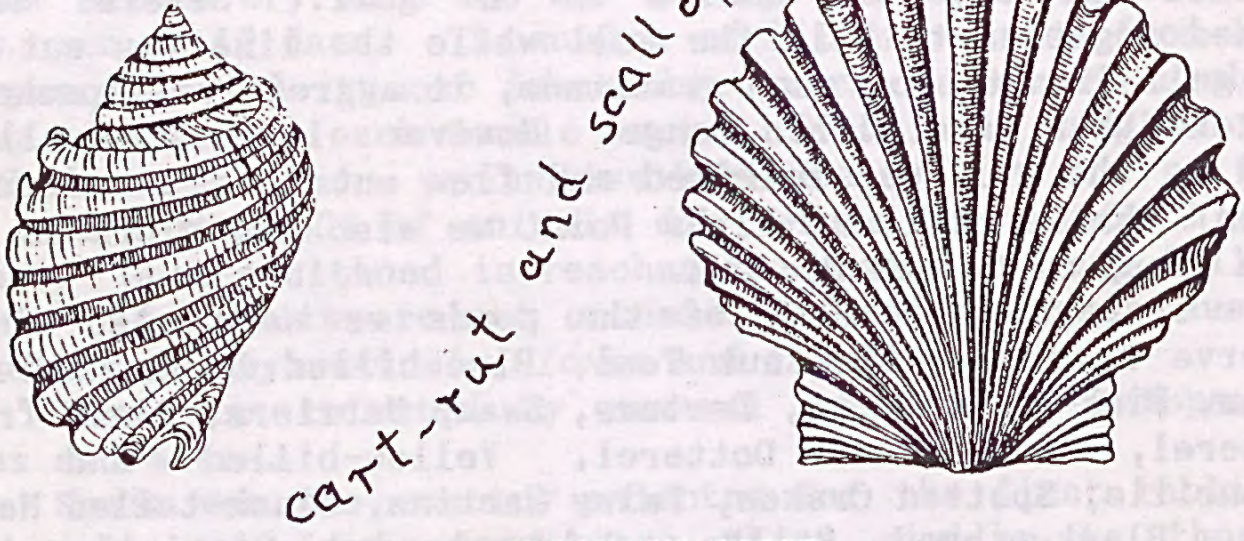
Ron Windsor was the speaker for our February meeting, he gave a most interesting talk on the propagation of plants.

He started off by discussing the kingdoms of living things - pointing out that biologists have been giving much attention to this subject over recent years.

Getting on to propagation, he outlined various requirements of seed propagation. He then discussed vegetative propagation from leaves, roots and stems - using such methods as budding, grafting, layering, leaf cuttings and root division.

He gave historical facts about propagation in ancient history, making it quite obvious that it is not something we have just learnt!

As well as being informative, Ron was a most lively and entertaining speaker! BDA



FEBRUARY POSER

The mystery organism was *Escherichia coli (E. coli)*. We have millions of them in our large intestine, many people would find the thought of this repulsive, but we would in fact be in a bad way if we didn't have them! BDA

MARCH POSER

Molly Dookers in nature? Seeing as we are on coastal topics this month, are shells left-handed or right-handed? If you look at conical shells such as the cart-rut (above), end on, do they all have the spirals going out in a right-handed (CW), left-handed (ACW) or random directions? Does the direction depend upon the species? Getting round to plants, do climbers twine around their support in any particular direction? If those questions were too easy, maybe you can give an explanation of the answers! BDA